

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-8 : (Canceled)

Claim 9 : (New) A communications system comprising: a communications network comprising network nodes and network links between the network nodes; and a network management system for allocating connections to the network, the connections utilizing the network nodes and the network links; in respect of each said connection, there being a number of possible ways to implement the connection on the network; the network management system, when allocating the connection to the network, selecting one of the number of possible ways to implement the connection; the network management system, when deciding whether to accept or reject a request for the connection on the network, having an option to accommodate the request to reconfigure existing connections on the network by selecting, in respect of at least one existing connection reconfigured, a different one of the number of possible ways to implement the connection; the reconfiguration by the network management system being constrained to set of possible reconfigurations which is a subset of the set of all possible reconfigurations of the existing connections on the network.

Claim 10 : (New) The communications system according to claim 9, wherein the existing connections on the network comprise reconfigurable and unreconfigurable connections, and the reconfiguration by the network management system is constrained to reconfiguration of only the reconfigurable connections.

Claim 11 : (New) The communications system according to claim 10, wherein the network management system reconfigures a reconfigurable connection by changing one of a wavelength on which the connection is made and a route taken by the connection.

Claim 12 : (New) The communications system according to claim 10, wherein the network management system reconfigures a reconfigurable connection by changing a wavelength on which the connection is made.

Claim 13 : (New) The communications system according to claim 9, wherein the reconfiguration by the network management system is constrained such that each existing connection on the network is reconfigured, but not every time in all ways possible for that connection.

Claim 14 : (New) The communications system according to claim 13, wherein each connection comprises a main and a standby path, and the reconfiguration by the network management system is constrained in that only the standby path, and not the main path, of the connection is changed.

Claim 15 : (New) The communications system according to claim 13, wherein, when first implementing the connection on the network, it is possible to choose both a route the connection will take and a wavelength on which the connection will be made, the reconfiguration by the network management system being constrained in that only one of the route and the wavelength of the connection is changed, not both.

Claim 16 : (New) The communications system according to claim 9, wherein the existing connections on the network switch between reconfigurable and unreconfigurable states, and the reconfiguration by the network management system is constrained

to reconfiguration of only those existing connections reconfigurable at the time the request for the connection on the network is made.